



1-28-2016

M. Blouke Carus

M. Blouke Carus

Meg Miner

Illinois Wesleyan University, mminer@iwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oral_hist



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carus, M. Blouke and Miner, Meg, "M. Blouke Carus" (2016). *All oral histories*. 85.
https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oral_hist/85

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Interview M. Blouke Carus

Meg Miner: This is an interview with Blouke Carus that took place on January 28, 2016.

[Mr. and Mrs. Carus were traveling in a car during this interview. Miner attempted to boost the sound level on the recording later but some parts are too distorted to easily understand.]

Miner: Start out by saying who you are and how you came to know President Myers.

Blouke Carus: I put it in writing; did you get that? In the beginning of the interview.

Miner: I got the—the first message that you sent, yes.

[In an email, Carus said: “I believe it was at the University Club of Chicago about a year or two before he died. I believe I visited him at his home and IWU two or three times, and Marianne was with me when we played chamber music together.”]

Carus: Okay. Yeah, because we didn’t know him very long, it was only a couple years or so...and uh, we didn’t remember him very well—I visited him more than two or three times. My wife was with me once when we played some Chamber music together, and he took us to the--the new library was just finished and it was spectacular and beautiful. And he really appreciated the children’s magazine of mine, [my wife was publishing] that we started at about—yeah, at that time. I hardly new him and then he died--about four or five? Something like that.

Miner: He did what four or five?

Carus: When did he pass away? The year. Like 2004 or 5?

Miner: Uh he—he died in 2003.

Carus: Three, yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Carus: Thank you.

Miner: And the library was built in 2002. It opened in 2002.

Carus: Yeah, right. And then [inaudible comment] So he was very exuberant and [inaudible comment] he—he really appreciated what we were trying to do with the magazines. Have you ever seen my magazines?

Miner: Um my nieces and nephews are great fans...[laughs]...

Carus: No, I—I was asking you the question. Did you ever see a magazine that we published?

Miner: I have not, no.

Carus: Oh, okay. Yeah they’re for—at the time there were 14 of them—uh children’s magazines from babies to teenagers. And they’re [truly?] international. So we [inaudible comment] Tokyo and authors and illustrators from all over the world. [inaudible comment] for one year old up to teenagers. 15—16—17 years old. And he said we had the best literature and the best illustrators of any magazine in America or perhaps in the world. So we really appreciated that.

And we had a conversation with Minor on that and it goes back to the nineteenth century when my great grandfather started Open Court Publishing Company to learn about philosophy and religions.

Miner: I'm sorry, could you say the last part again? I think my—our connection is getting a little bit less uh—

Carus: Right. My great grandfather—he [Myers] appreciated what we started—what my great grandfather started with Open Court Publishing Company uh and the philosophy and religions. Because he [inaudible comment] the Open Court and the [inaudible comment]. And then my grandfather was the editor chosen in 1919 when he passed away.

Miner: Hm.

Carus: So yeah, he wrote about 75 books and—and uh published about a thousand articles alone, in the two magazines that he had started. The Open Court magazine was sort of like the Scientific America but it in the social sciences and now the [inaudible comment] is still being published. We made arrangements for—the [inaudible comment] Oxford University Press is actually publishing it so [inaudible comment] taking him all over the world. That's the—that's the philosophy journal. The Open Court died in '36 when my grandmother died. And nobody ever saw a need to start that up.

Miner: Hm.

Carus: [inaudible comment] And all the documents, all the magazines and correspondence for the two magazines are down in Southern Illinois University.

Miner: Okay.

Carus: So my grandfather was the only one in—in—in America—he was born in Germany and came over about 1870—who travelled to Europe every year to [listen?] to scholars. And that, of course, was just something that Minor really appreciated and was interested in, so we had a lot of conversations about those things—

Miner: About the history of your family?

Carus: —reviving the Parliament of the World Religions. Did you hear that?

Miner: I have not, no.

Carus: Yeah, so he of course was interested in the original Parliament in 1893 in Chicago and [for] the first time in modern history [inaudible comment]. There were actually a few people who [inaudible comment] who tried to work with the world religions but that [was back in 2- or 300 A.D.?] it wasn't a real parliament or meeting. So the Parliament of World Religions at the World's Fair in 1893 for the first time, basically, in history was when all the major religions got together and talked about their religions and didn't start a war.

Miner: Hm. Pretty radical idea—

Carus: They actually were—they were actually—from my grandfather's point of view, when they asked people there, it was like the second coming of Christ. And they recognized the—similarities or basic [premises?] of the religions. So he became a secretary to continue to try to keep it going and he was unable to do that. So in 1890—in 1993 at the Palmer House, they actually, yet again got 8 or 9 thousand people from all over the world and so it's now—it's now permanent. This institution, so far, [inaudible comment] and uh—and now, probably more in the future, [inaudible comment].

Miner: Do you know if Minor went to the one in 1993?

Carus: Excuse me?

Miner: Did Minor go to the one in 1993?

Carus: No.

Miner: Okay.

Carus: No, he didn't.

Miner: So what was—what do you think then his connection was with—between literature and publishing? Did you—did you talk specifically about those areas of your life, your expertise, or was he interested mostly in the promotion of literature through the work that you're doing and your family has done?

Carus: So he was just, you know, being—being, basically a Renaissance man. He really relished it, all the aspects of it.

[Miner laughs]

Carus: The actual story—he just appreciated the magazines themselves because they were truly international and high quality. [We emphasized?] quality. And good illustrations, good stories, original stories. [inaudible comment] Sometimes my wife—my wife did all the work—

[Miner laughs]

Carus:—for over 30 years. She would be best at—

Miner: Perhaps I should talk to her too...[laughs]...

Carus: Yeah, sure! You should.

Miner: Do you know if Minor collected any of the Open Court or any other publications maybe that your family—

Carus: I—I don't know about that. I—I just don't remember whether he—he did or not. He was just interested in everything that my grandfather did and what—what we were doing and—just in the world in general. Just in music and art and the history of art, sheet music, so he—he tried to [read German?] stuff. [inaudible comment] And he did play the harpsichord, didn't he?

Miner: He did. Yes, from what I understand.

Carus: Yeah, he did pretty well. He played the harpsichord.

Miner: Oh, okay.

Carus: And [I'm trying to think who?] invited us there. I actually met somebody from Illinois Wesleyan who was a coach at Interlochen. I forget, I don't know exactly how it is we got connected. I think it was through [inaudible comment] the music department at Illinois Wesleyan, he was a Russian fellow.

Miner: Oh, Vadim Mazo.

Carus: Vadim Mazo—

Miner: Mazo.

Carus: Is he still there?

Miner: He sure is, yeah. I talked to him last week about this.

Carus: Oh, okay.

Miner: Yeah.

Carus: It may have been through Vadim, who was actually—he encouraged me to meet with Myers. I'd forgotten that's exactly how that happened.

Miner: Hm. Interesting.

Carus: Vadim, yeah. He's a great, very inspiring guy, Vadim. With a very good [inaudible comment]. We played chamber music with him at Interlochen.

Miner: That's amazing how uh—how far-reaching these relationships can be. If—if you—if Mary Anne can, I would love to talk with her.

Carus: Sure. Sure, we really didn't know him that long.

Miner: Thank you for taking the time. I hope you're almost home or—

Carus: Yes, we are. Okay. Very good. Thank you and bye.